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General Assembly

Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

99th plenary meeting
Friday, 11 August 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Nigeria)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter from the Secretary-General (A/54/915/Add.1)

The Acting President: In the letter contained in document A/54/915/Add.1, the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/54/915, the Congo and Ecuador have made the necessary payments to reduce their arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 49 (*continued*)

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

(b) The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Draft resolution A/54/L.87

The Acting President: Following the informal consultations of the plenary on 2 August 2000 and the agreement reached during those consultations to formalize all the decisions made relating to practical matters for the organization of the Millennium Summit of the United Nations by way of a resolution, I am pleased to introduce to the General Assembly for its kind attention draft resolution A/54/L.87.

The draft resolution, which was issued yesterday morning, was also faxed to all Member States on Wednesday evening, 9 August. I wish to remind representatives of the need to expeditiously deal with these matters and not to reopen debates on issues that we have already agreed upon. We need to focus all of our attention on the substantive issues in preparation for the Millennium Summit.

Before we proceed to consider draft resolution A/54/L.87, I should like to submit to members some oral revisions to the annex of the draft resolution.

The following words should be deleted from paragraph 1 of the annex, line 5: "at all times".

The following words should be deleted from paragraph 5 (a) of the annex: in subparagraph (i),

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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"thirteen or"; in subparagraph (ii), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (iii), "five or"; in subparagraph (iv), "eight or"; in subparagraph (v), "seven or"

In paragraph 5 (b) of the annex, the following words should be deleted: in subparagraph (i), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (ii), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (iii), "five or"; in subparagraph (iv), "eight or"; in subparagraph (v), "seven or"

I turn now to paragraph 5 (c).

The following words should be deleted: in subparagraph (i), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (ii), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (iii), "five or"; in subparagraph (iv), "eight or"; and in subparagraph (v), "seven or".

I turn next to paragraph 5 (d).

The following words should be deleted: in subparagraph (i), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (ii), "thirteen or"; in subparagraph (iii), "five or"; in subparagraph (iv), "eight or"; and in subparagraph (v), "seven or".

I turn now to paragraph 6, which concerns the chairpersons of the round tables.

Paragraph 6 (a) remains unchanged.

Paragraph 6 (b) should read as follows:

"(b) The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, President of the Republic of Poland;"

Paragraph 6 (c) should read as follows:

"(c) The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of the Republic of Venezuela;"

Paragraph 6 (d) should read as follows:

"(d) The round table to be held on Friday, 8 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria."

This is the end of the revisions.

Mr. McKenzie (Trinidad and Tobago): We thank you very much, Mr. President, for your revisions, of which we have taken note.

I should like, however, to refer to paragraph 11 and to make a very slight suggestion. I wish to put forward for the Assembly's consideration the recommendation that in the third line of that paragraph, right after the words "In this connection", we insert the following phrase:

"without prejudice to other organizations which have observer status with the United Nations".

I am making this proposal in the belief that it will take care of any concerns that may be expressed by other agencies or observers, such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) or others.

The Acting President: The suggested amendment has been considered and is accepted, but it should read "observer status with the General Assembly", not "with the United Nations".

Mr. Ahmad Chaudhry (Pakistan): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss this draft resolution on organizational matters.

The numerous informal meetings of the plenary that we have had over the past few weeks have afforded all of us an excellent opportunity to voice our views on procedural and substantive issues. We are happy to note that the draft resolution before us captures the sense of our informal consultations. We wish to thank you, Sir, and your colleagues for preparing the draft. We have referred it to our authorities and hope we can finalize it as early as possible.

However, at this stage, since I am opening the discussion, I would like to offer some preliminary comments.

We have only two comments on paragraphs 10 and 11 of the annex. Concerning paragraph 10, which deals with the summaries of the deliberations of the four round tables, we propose that the chairpersons of the four round tables present their summaries individually. The paragraph reads "individually or collectively", but our proposal is for it to be done individually. Each chairperson should present the summary orally, as a matter of his or her own personal responsibility.

With respect to the same paragraph, we feel that there should be a verbatim record of the round-table discussions. We know that the round tables are closed meetings. However, the verbatim records would not be for external publicity but for use by authorized representatives of Member States. The Security Council holds closed meetings, but a verbatim record is prepared for use by the Council members. I say this only by way of example.

Furthermore, we see no contradiction between verbatim records and the informal exchange of views. These records are for posterity and will go a long way towards promoting greater understanding among Member States of each other's frank viewpoints.

Our next comment is with regard to paragraph 11. We fully agree that representatives of intergovernmental organizations and of civil society may participate in the plenary meetings, but we do not understand why a representative of religious and spiritual leaders should attend. Civil society will be represented by the Millennium Forum. By inviting a representative of religious and spiritual leaders, we are being selective. There could be hundreds of other organizations which might have stronger credentials for being represented here.

The delegation of Pakistan wishes to underscore the fact that the Millennium Summit remains an intergovernmental event. For this reason, in our view, priority should be given to the representatives of intergovernmental organizations and to those that have observer status with the United Nations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Having made these preliminary remarks, we wish to assure the Assembly of our full cooperation and support in making this historic Summit a great success.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): I thank the President and the Secretariat for preparing the draft resolution we have before us. I would like to raise just one question at this stage. Paragraph 4 of the annex states that

> "Each head of State or head of Government attending the round tables may be accompanied by two advisers."

My question is, these two advisers, does this include or exclude an interpreter?

The Acting President: My view on that score is that that will exclude interpreters.

Mr. Wang Donghua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the President very much for preparing the draft resolution before us.

We do not have any difficulty with most of the content of the draft resolution. I would like to make a short comment on paragraph 11 of the annex. We very much understand the non-governmental organizations' intent and willingness to participate in the Millennium Summit. However, we feel that the Millennium Summit should stress its intergovernmental nature. At the present stage the General Assembly has not invited any of the non-governmental organizations listed in paragraph 11 to participate in its conferences and meetings. There is no procedure providing for this, nor is there any precedent for it. If we were to allow one organization to participate in such meetings, there would be ample grounds for allowing all these kinds of organizations to participate in such meetings. And if all these non-governmental organizations were to be allowed to participate in our meetings, they would definitely have a negative impact on the smooth conduct of our Millennium Summit. Therefore, we agree with the position stated by some representatives earlier, that we should allow only non-governmental organizations that have General Assembly observer status to participate in this Millennium Summit.

My second point is as follows. We have noted that the time allowed for the head of State of each country to make a statement is very, very limited. This shows that the Summit understands well the procedure of allowing heads of State and Government to make statements. Otherwise, there would not be any restriction on the time allowed for heads of State to make their statements.

In this regard, on the one hand, the time allowed for heads of State is limited; on the other hand, if we allow certain non-governmental organizations to participate in the Summit, conflicts will arise. We hope that this potential conflict will be given careful consideration.

As regards the records of the round tables, we support the position expressed just now by the representative of Pakistan.

The Acting President: I thank the representative of the Republic of China. I will address the last point

he made so that it will be disposed of immediately. That point was raised at the last meeting, and the transcript shows clearly the President's position.

This question was also raised at that meeting by Pakistan. The representative of Pakistan said:

> "I am sorry to take the floor again, but my own understanding of the very succinct presentation by the representative of Singapore and of your own statement, Mr. Chairman, is that there will be oral summaries by the four Chairmen and that the verbatim record will be for the use of delegations. If that is the understanding, then we can go along with it."

The President said:

> "That is not the understanding; there will be no verbatim records."

In my opening remarks I pleaded that we not attempt to reopen closed debates. So I just wanted to make this remark known.

As regards the other issues raised, I will leave them to the Secretariat.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I wanted to thank you, Sir, for your extremely vigorous efforts to help us arrive at a consensus on this draft resolution.

I just had a minor comment that concerns the intergovernmental organizations that are mentioned in paragraph 11 of the annex to the draft resolution. France, on behalf of the European Union, notes that we hoped that it would also be possible under certain conditions for the representatives of the intergovernmental organizations listed in paragraph 11 — organizations that have United Nations observer status — to speak at the round tables. To this end, the European Union suggests that the second sentence of paragraph 7 be amended to read:

> "The Holy See and Switzerland, in their capacity as observer States, and Palestine, in its capacity as observer, as well as the intergovernmental organizations listed in paragraph 11 below ..."

The sentence would then continue as now.

This proposed amendment would make it possible for the President of the General Assembly to see whether it is possible for some of the representatives of the intergovernmental organizations listed in paragraph 11 also to speak in the round tables if time allows.

The Acting President: My view is that we will have no objection, but remember that we are constrained by space in the rooms; hence, the maximum numbers referred to in paragraph 5 of the annex. Those numbers are indicative of the total space available in the rooms. So, we have no objection as long as there will be adequate accommodation in the rooms.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): As a matter of fact, I have a few simple comments with regard to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the annex. My delegation was one of the delegations that has asked for oral and written minutes to be provided for the meetings of the round tables.

As regards paragraph 10, in addition to the consensus that there should be oral summaries, we would prefer that such summaries be individual for each of the round tables and that the Chairman of each round table be given a chance to give an oral presentation of the summary. This will provide each country with the opportunity to know what its Presidents or leaders have said, as well as provide minutes for these discussions. In fact, I could not really understand the last sentence in paragraph 10, which, I believe, has been drafted in such a way as to provoke and does not provide for verbatim records.

I think that this last sentence does not represent the point of view of some of the countries — not just Pakistan — that during the discussions have demanded that oral records and written verbatim records be provided. I would like to thank the representative of Pakistan for referring to this particular sentence.

With regard to paragraph 11, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic supports the participation of the governmental organizations that have the status of observer. If we allow governmental organizations — and I believe that there was some hesitation during the discussions regarding whether or not to accept governmental organizations — what then is the wisdom of accepting civil organizations, particularly the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, since there are thousands of religious organizations all over the world? I believe that in doing so we would be co-opting the Summit and rendering it a mixture of different organizations. Therefore, I support once more the proposal of Pakistan that there is no justification to

allow the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders to join. I think it is sufficient to allow only the governmental organizations that have observer status to attend.

The Acting President: Let me just say in reference to the last sentence of paragraph 10, that this point dragged on and on and, in the end, a decision was taken and the gavel came down. What the President said at the time was that he appealed to members not to insist on verbatim records but to leave it to the four Chairpersons to agree among themselves and to make reports to the plenary as appropriate. That is what I am ruling on. It has been so decided. So I will plead that we do not reopen that issue.

On the other point that you raised, regarding religious bodies and the rest, we will be looking at that.

Do you want to engage me in an argument? I have not given you the floor yet . Do you want us to play ping-pong?

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic): You have to give me the floor to say whether I want us to play ping-pong or not.

The Acting President: You have the floor.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Sir. I do not really want to play ping-pong. I am not very good at the game. I do not want to get into an argument with you, but nevertheless, if this is your explanation, why then should we have this sentence about no verbatim records? Surely, it would be enough to have one single sentence without having to say that there will be no verbatim records.

The Acting President: What is your recommendation? What are you suggesting?

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic): My recommendation is to delete the last sentence.

The Acting President: Thank you, we will think about that.

Mr. Moore (Bahamas): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and the Secretariat on producing this fine document. It has some very excellent points. I would wish, though, to address a few remarks to the question of paragraph 5 of the annex.

I attended a number of informal meetings and discussions on the question of the distribution of members' participation in the round tables, and I was of the opinion that there could have been some flexibility within each grouping with regard to the distribution. In fact, I obtained that impression from no less a personage than the President of the Assembly.

I wish to draw attention to this and make just one or two minor suggestions regarding paragraph 5, and subparagraphs 5 (a) (iv) and 5 (b) (iv) in particular. Within the Latin American and Caribbean grouping, we have had a number of meetings and informal discussions regarding how best we can arrange equitable geographical distribution not only for the round table but also within our grouping. After much deliberation, and appreciating the fact that there needs to be some limit to the numbers in the room, we would wish to make the following amendment to subparagraph 5 (a) (iv), regarding the round table to be held on Wednesday, 6 September: we wish the number "nine" to be changed to "ten". With regard to the second round table, we also wish the number "nine" to be changed to "ten". The other numbers can remain the same.

In making this suggestion, I was under the impression that there would be some flexibility within the grouping and that the final distribution would have been agreed between the Chairmen of the four round tables. I would therefore suggest that the starting text of paragraph 5 of the annex have an addition made so that the final distribution of the round tables would be left to the discretion of the Chairmen of the four round tables, with the specific recommendation that subparagraph 5 (a) (iv) be altered from "nine" to "ten" and item 5 (b) (iv) be altered to "ten".

The Acting President: Let me say that the flexibility the Ambassador of the Bahamas is talking about is obviously built into these numbers. Only this morning — and that is part of the reason we were late in starting this meeting — we were having consultations with the Chairmen of the regional groupings. What we find here is the result of earlier consultations and a final consultation held this morning. I think it would be unwise to start making changes, particularly when the points that the Ambassador has raised have apparently been taken into consideration. I am speaking about equitable geographical distribution and the flexibility in the numbers. That flexibility means that we are not going to come up here and say that from the Caribbean, for example, you must have 10 heads of State attending the

meeting. That is not what we are saying. The flexibility is such that if it turns out that no head of State comes, for example, or that some people do not want to be there, we can have from zero to nine, which is what we have here.

I do not know what statistics you, Mr. Ambassador, have used for increasing your own number to 10, but I know that a lot of effort and consultations have gone into the numbers as you see them here. The difference between 9 and 10 is neither here nor there. I appeal to you to leave the numbers unchanged. Thank you very much for your understanding.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt): It is always a pleasure for my delegation to see you presiding over our deliberations, Sir.

I have some comments to make, but since my delegation previously stressed these points, I will be very brief. The first comment concerns the last sentence of paragraph 10 of the annex. My delegation stressed several times that we need to seriously consider having verbatim records for the sake of transparency and for the sake of fairness. We believe that summary records might reflect some of the points raised, but not all of them. Those records might reflect certain points of importance to some heads of State, but not necessarily to all of the others.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime event, and we have to document it, as previous speakers have mentioned. My recollection is — and you were right — that our President, in his wisdom felt that there was no agreement on this issue; he said that it should be referred to the Chairmen of the four round tables to discuss among themselves. My own interpretation, as well as my delegation's, was that they would discuss this issue among themselves and decide whether to have verbatim records or not. This has to be very clear. Nothing has been decided. With all due respect, an issue of this importance should not be decided unilaterally by anybody. This is the first point I wanted to make.

The second point concerns paragraph 11. We fully support — as mentioned — having a representative of civil society speak on behalf of all civil society and non-governmental organizations. This is fine with us. Why do we have to allow other non-governmental organizations, given the very limited time available? This point was highlighted and stressed by our President. How can we really do this in the light of the fact that the space allotted to our heads of State and Government is very limited? Of course, we will respect this. I think we have to apply equal treatment and stress the importance of this event, which is a governmental event, a summit. We have to concentrate on this point. Of course, we have no difficulty in giving the right to address the General Assembly to organizations with observer status with the Assembly, not with the Economic and Social Council. This will also have to be done very carefully so as not to infringe on the time given to our heads of State and Government.

The last point I wish to make concerns paragraph 7. We have no difficulty in supporting the amendment proposed by the representative of France.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): I want to start with the issue of paragraph 11, which includes the list of intergovernmental organizations and others who can address the plenary. At the end, what was decided in our consultations at the last meeting was that all those who are making requests should be listed for all of us to see, and then we can take a subsequent decision. I think that is what has happened with this particular paragraph.

I remember that the representative of Algeria and others raised objections to the inclusion of the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders on the sound argument that that non-governmental organization and the representative of the non-governmental organization Forum would both be given the floor in the plenary Assembly. So, to single out one non-governmental organization and give it special treatment would create enormous difficulties for other non-governmental organizations.

Based on that, I think there are solid grounds for deleting the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders from the list of those to address the plenary meetings, while retaining the Millennium Forum, which is a non-governmental organization forum that could address the Summit on behalf of all non-governmental organizations.

Secondly, with respect to paragraph 10 of the annex, your opening remarks, Sir, succinctly summarized what took place: there were a few delegations that wanted verbatim records of the round tables, and after intensive debate the decision was taken that there would be no verbatim records of those round tables, to allow our heads of State or

Government to engage in a frank exchange of views. It was based on that that the President of the General Assembly ruled at that time that there would be no verbatim records. Hence, paragraph 10 reflects what took place at the most recent meeting of the informal consultations. The reference to the round-table chairpersons giving individual or collective summaries was included to allow the chairpersons of the round tables to consult among themselves and decide how they would present their summaries: either collectively or individually. It is not necessary for us to tie the hands of the heads of State or Government who will be presiding over the round tables. That, I think, was among the decisions taken on that day. I mention them to refresh our memory.

Turning to paragraph 11 of the annex, I should like to insert the word "and" at the beginning of the amendment proposed earlier, which would now read as follows:

> "and without prejudice to other organizations that have observer status with the General Assembly".

The Acting President: I have been advised that we can delete the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders from the list contained in paragraph 11 of the annex without unduly destabilizing that paragraph. The amendment proposed by France, along with the other issues, will be looked into.

Ms. Ibraimova (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): I am grateful that this very timely meeting has been convened.

We have quickly moved to the operative part and the annex of the draft resolution, but I should like to propose a minor amendment to part (b) (iii) of the third preambular paragraph, which encourages Member States to be represented at the round tables at the level of heads of State or Government. As we know, not all States will be represented at the Millennium Summit at that level, so I would propose that the wording be changed to the following:

> "Member States are encouraged to be represented at the round tables at the level of heads of delegation."

Mr. Wang Donghua (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I regret having had to ask for the floor again. Following my earlier statement, Mr. President, you referred to my country incorrectly. I take this opportunity to reiterate that there is only one China in the world: the People's Republic of China. The Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate Government representing the whole of China.

The Acting President: I sincerely apologize to the representative of the People's Republic of China. He will understand that I am very new to this business, and am still learning.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am delighted, Sir, to see you presiding over our work today. My delegation is pleased with the draft resolution prepared by the President of the Assembly, which provides a basis for broad consensus.

The chairpersons of the round tables have already been agreed upon, as have, to a large extent, the participants in each one. It might be useful for the chairpersons of the round tables, or their representatives, to hold an informal dialogue with the delegations to be involved in their respective round tables in order to determine how the discussion will proceed. There are no specific themes for the round tables, apart from the overarching theme of the Millennium Summit, so the work of the chairpersons and participants could be facilitated by prior informal consultations on the topics to be taken up at the round tables. This would enable participants to prepare their contributions and could prevent the discussion from being so broad as to be impractical.

On the question of whether or not there should be verbatim records of the round tables, I wish to endorse the Chair's ruling. This matter has been amply discussed, and the point is a simple one: the round tables are, in a way, like the retreats Governments conduct among themselves: such retreats do not have records of any kind. Heads of State or Government can talk among themselves, say what they like, and then withdraw to analyse the issues before them. This is very similar to the philosophy to be adopted at the round tables. If there are verbatim records, I fear that most if not all heads of State or Government will arrive with prepared mini-speeches, and that the round tables will turn into mini-general debates. That, of course, is not the intention. So I want to clearly align my delegation with the decision taken and with the Acting President's ruling made this morning.

Finally, even though I have taken note of the elimination of the World Peace Summit of Religious

and Spiritual Leaders as a possible candidate for participation in the Millennium Summit, I regret that, because I think that as far as civil society is concerned — and I am not referring to the intergovernmental agencies, I am referring to civil society per se — either we do this looking to the past, with a strong emphasis on the intergovernmental aspect, or we include the participation of civil society looking to the future, making room for other organizations to contribute. It seems to me that organizations that represent certain value systems should be represented in this process.

Mr. Osman (Sudan): I would like to comment on paragraph 10. In this regard, we strongly support those delegations that have requested verbatim records of the round tables. But even if it is the President's ruling that verbatim records will not be easy to produce, we think the last sentence of paragraph 10 is provocative. For those who have been here for a long time and are familiar with the drafting of resolutions, it is known that in drafting resolutions, elements are normally included that have been agreed upon. It is not a tradition to include issues that have not been agreed upon. This is unprecedented and provocative, and we reject it. We fully support the deletion of that sentence.

I have noted during this meeting that the Acting President made a ruling on accepting the deletion of certain parts of certain paragraphs. We strongly request that this sentence be deleted and that a ruling be made on that at this meeting.

The Acting President: The comments of the representative of the Sudan have been noted.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting.

I must confess my delegation's confusion about what is happening at this meeting. This is a formal meeting of the General Assembly at which a draft resolution has been presented, and it was my delegation's understanding that action would be taken on it at this meeting. However, it is obvious to everyone that there are a number of elements in this draft resolution on which there is no consensus and that somehow, by my estimate, no less than 26 amendments to this text have been put forward by various parties. Frankly, the environment in this room is one of informal consultations, rather than of a formal meeting of the General Assembly. Perhaps this shows that the procedures we used in the informal consultations were not the most effective ones.

Comments have been made at this meeting in agreement with, differing with or even advising Member States, and reports have been quoted relating to meetings for which there are no records or documentation. The rules of the General Assembly do not place any restrictions on the sovereignty of a formal meeting of the General Assembly to take a decision. The Acting President has very kindly explained to us that some of the controversial issues will be dealt with later. These are points on which there clearly is no consensus.

I would like to ask you, Mr. Acting President, what your idea is regarding the procedure to be followed at this meeting; whether you intend to return to those controversial items later; whether you intend to convene another meeting; whether there will be informal consultations; or whether it is your intention to take action on this draft resolution with the 26 amendments we have just heard here over the last few minutes?

Another point relates to the difficulties involved in a summit, particularly from a technical standpoint. There is a serious time restriction for the statements of heads of State, who will travel thousands of kilometres to speak for just a few minutes. I would like to ask, on the calculated basis of a rational use of the time limits established for heads of State, how much more time will be available for the plenary of the Summit? If we receive the good news that time is available, then my delegation would prefer that the heads of State be given more time to make their statements.

Another point relates to the technical conditions of the round tables. It has been said that there are not enough seats and that the heads of State can only have two assistants with them. I was very pleased to hear your interpretation, Sir, that the interpreter is not included in that number. I would like to know, once we know the composition of the tables and the rooms to be used, how many available seats will remain in the corresponding room, assuming the presence of the head of State or Government and two assistants. If there is space available, then my delegation would be delighted if three or four assistants, instead of two, could accompany the head of State.

Thirdly, my delegation notes contradictions between the intended nature of the round tables and

some amendments that have been put forward. Other speakers have said that the heads of State would not be comfortable if there were verbatim records and that they would prefer a very informal format in which, as has been said, the heads of State could freely exchange views. One delegation even compared the nature of these round tables to certain retreats that heads of State or Government sometimes hold.

An amendment has been proposed regarding the attendance of non-governmental organizations at the round tables. My delegation, which favours the broadest participation of civil society in all activities of all United Nations bodies, feels, however, that the presence of civil society representatives would be complicated, if it is a matter of heads of States freely exchanging views among themselves.

We would therefore have no difficulty with broad participation in the round tables, with records being made or with heads of State bringing written statements and speaking for the benefit of international public opinion. Or, the round tables could be informal in nature and not have verbatim records but be strictly governmental, with only heads of State or Government speaking among themselves.

My delegation would be delighted to have an idea of what is going to be happening in the next few hours in this meeting, because I believe we are going to be taking decisions that will affect the role of our heads of State at the Millennium Summit. These are very serious decisions, and with respect to some of them we may have to consult with our capitals.

The Acting President: If I may say so, the representative of Cuba's tally of 26 suggested amendments does not match my own at this point. What I have been trying to do is to listen to everyone and, obviously, to make comments at the end, because one cannot start responding to every comment or observation. Some have suggested deleting, in paragraph 10, the sentence stating that there would be no verbatim record, and there have been one or two other suggestions, but no one has actually referred to any specific amendments in this document or suggested any alternative language.

Therefore we are now listening to observations, and the intention is to draw conclusions when we get to the end. I have made comments only where it was necessary to establish the meeting's focus more clearly.

Mr. Juwayeyi (Malawi): Let me take this opportunity, Sir, to say how pleased my delegation is to see you preside over our meeting this morning.

I think that all there is to be said about paragraph 10 has been said. Like you, Mr. President, I am very new at the United Nations, and over the past few months I have made mistakes. I have sat in the wrong place in the Security Council, where I was not supposed to be in the first place. But we learn by making those mistakes, and one lesson I have learned today is that once the gavel has come down, one cannot revisit an issue, even though the consensus of the majority might be that the gavel came down when the issue was not exactly settled.

I think that all there is to say about paragraph 10 has been said. But we should remember that 100 years from today there will be a summit, though looking around this room I do not think that any of us will be there. Maybe they will call it a "century summit", since today we have a Millennium Summit. At that summit, they will want to know what we did 100 years earlier. That is the reason why we keep records. It is important that these records be correct, and that is why it is crucial that we have all types of records of these round tables, including verbatim records. It is not for us but for posterity, and that is why I want to agree with the delegations that have called for keeping proper records.

If people 100 years from today do not see any records, they will wonder what technology we had. But we have that technology at our disposal today. It will not cost much, it will not take too much of our time, and it will serve us well and also benefit our great-grandchildren, who will be debating these issues 100 years from today.

Having said that about paragraph 10, let me agree with the delegation of Chile as concerns paragraph 11. My delegation regrets the deletion of the reference to the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. I am sure there is a good reason for its inclusion in the document and that the people who included it had very good reasons for doing so. In my view, it would do no harm to keep it there. The more opinions we have, the more we will learn and the better we will serve the world.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman): Let me start, Sir, by saying how happy the delegation of Oman is to see you presiding over the deliberations of this meeting. By the same token, I should like to express our gratitude and

thanks to you for convening this meeting and to all of those who contributed to the preparation of the draft resolution before us. It is a well-written and well-balanced document, though it could be improved.

Earlier in the day, the delegation of Kyrgyzstan spoke about those delegations that will not be able to attend the Millennium Summit at the level of head of State or head of Government. I think those remarks were pertinent and quite logical. My delegation supports them fully, with a view to streamlining the language in this draft to accommodate those countries.

Having said that, let me also draw the attention of my colleagues to paragraph 4 of the annex. Here we have the same concern as the one raised by the representative of Kyrgyzstan. I propose that we change the first line of that paragraph to "Each head of delegation to the Summit" instead of being specific, in order to give equal treatment to every State.

Mr. Albín (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish very briefly to give my delegation's reaction to the proposal made by Kyrgyzstan and Oman.

The third preambular paragraph of this draft resolution confines itself to recalling resolution 54/261, which was adopted on 10 May of this year. That decision has already been adopted and therefore cannot be changed. The last sentence of subparagraph (b) (iii), on page 2, cannot be changed, because it is a decision that was adopted last May. We cannot change today a decision adopted two months ago.

Secondly, my delegation remains convinced that participation in the round tables must be confined to governmental representatives. We find no reason to provide for the participation of representatives of international organizations.

Thirdly, the Mexican delegation supports the understanding of the presidency regarding the last sentence of paragraph 10 to the effect that there is already a general understanding that there should not be any verbatim records. As to whether this understanding is written down or not, this is a question that you, Sir, can resolve. In any event, we believe that the understanding that there will be only summaries, prepared by the Chairpersons of the round tables, should be clear in the minds of all delegations.

Mr. Moore (Bahamas): I apologize for taking the floor again, but I need to correct an impression left by a statement you made, Sir, with regard to the proposal I put forward. As Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group for the month of August, I was not present at any meeting at which consensus was arrived at regarding the determination of the final distribution of the round tables. I wish this to be noted, lest the impression be given that the Latin American and Caribbean Group was reneging on any agreement. I was not present at any such meeting.

I just wanted to say this for the record.

The Acting President: This is noted.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): During our last meeting, we took a number of decisions on the organizational issues regarding the Millennium Summit, which are today reflected in the draft resolution before us. At that very same meeting, at the very last minute, a proposal was made for today's meeting to be convened so that we could adopt formally the decisions we took last week. So I would like to join your appeal, Sir, for us not to reopen the decisions we took last week on the logistical aspects of the Millennium Summit.

Having said that, let me touch on paragraph 10 of the annex which, as it did last time, generated a lot of discussion. But I think that statements that were made by, among others, the Ambassador of Singapore made most of us, if not everybody, see the light on not having verbatim records. It was on that basis that a decision was taken. As my colleague from Nigeria has said, paragraph 10, as reflected in the draft before us, is indeed a reflection of the decision we took last time. What was left to the Chairmen of the round tables was how in fact they were going to submit their summaries, but the issue of the verbatim records was resolved; it was not left to the Chairmen of the round tables.

So I would once again like to plead that we display our usual sense of cooperation so that we can wrap up this draft resolution that is before us. I think that the proposal made by the delegation of Syria, which also raised the issue of verbatim records last time, but as usual cooperated with the President when we were discussing this issue —

I think that the understanding is that there are going to be only summaries. And I once again want to really bring it home to delegations here that we need to stand by the decision we took last time.

The other issue that was raised last week is the flexibility with regard to heads of delegations attending

a round table when a head of State cannot do so. As far as my delegation is concerned, we are content with the way the level of participation is reflected in the draft resolution, because I think there is an understanding, we took a decision. This issue was raised by at least five delegations last time. Perhaps what we can do is to add a sentence spelling out that when a head of State cannot attend, the head of delegation will attend the round table. But I think that as far as our delegation is concerned, we can also go along with what is in the draft resolution, while retaining this understanding among ourselves that indeed there is flexibility in terms of delegating participation in the round tables to the head of delegation.

The other issue is that, as with any other United Nations resolution, one's concerns cannot be met 100 per cent. I think everyone needs to show flexibility. Most of our concerns have been met. After all, it is a Summit for all of us. I appeal to delegations once again to display flexibility and cooperation so that we can finalize these logistical aspects and move on to other, bigger, substantial issues.

Those are my few comments. I would also like to make a very brief comment after we adopt the draft resolution, as I hope we will.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I can see that you are not having an easy time at this meeting, Sir. I hope that my contribution today will make your job much easier rather than much harder.

Like many others in this room, I hope that we will not leave it without taking action on the draft resolution before us. We have literally less than four weeks to go before our heads of State or Government, or heads of delegation, arrive in New York City for the Millennium Summit, and I think that each one of us is receiving a barrage of questions from our capitals about the arrangements for the Summit. Each one of us is being asked to give definite answers. Up till now all of our answers have been vague; we are saying that probably it will be like this, probably it will be like that, but we have not been able to give our leaders any categorical assurances about how the Summit will be held. So, given the time pressure, I hope that we will be able to reach at least some form of a decision this morning, especially on the draft resolution before us.

I think I can share and empathize with the concerns that have been expressed by the Ambassador of Cuba. If you count it mathematically, he is technically correct to say that many amendments have been made, especially if you include the deletion of "thirteen or" in subparagraph 5 (a).

If you count those amendments, then it comes to a mathematically large number. But if you look at the substance of the various amendments that have been put forward, I think it is possible, as our colleague from Namibia was saying in such a spirit of goodwill, to reach some kind of decision this morning.

The issue which has clearly raised the most concern or expressions of disquiet has been certainly the last sentence of paragraph 10 of the annex, which says that there will be no verbatim record of discussions in the round tables. This, I suppose, has been by far the hottest issue that has been discussed this morning.

If we listen carefully to the suggestions made by the Permanent Representative of Syria and the representative of the Sudan, we might find a way out of the dilemma that we face here. All that they are suggesting is that the sentence itself be deleted from the draft resolution, but I think no attempt was made to change the decision of the President when he ruled the last time. So if we can live with the decision of the President, there may not necessarily be a need to reflect that in this draft resolution. If that is the only thing that is holding us back in terms of adopting the draft resolution today, I hope we will find a way of doing so without additional difficulties.

There have also been a lot of suggestions made on the participation of observers at the Millennium Summit, both in plenary meeting and the round tables. Here I think we are basically trying to square the circle. The fundamental problem is that we have a Summit that lasts only three days, and there are only six plenary meetings and four round tables. Mathematically, if you work it out, that is 1,080 minutes of plenary meeting and 720 of round tables. If you divide it by the various numbers of speakers, there remain the tremendous constraints of time that we have.

If we want the heads of State and heads of Government to be the prime participants in this Summit, we have to give them priority both in the plenary meetings and in the round tables. If we have an understanding that we are giving them priority, then I think the participation of observers, as, indeed, paragraph 11 says, will be qualified as "time permitting". That is a very important qualification that

has been put in the annex. It says, "time permitting". That, I suppose, gives us enough flexibility to incorporate those observers who want to participate. But the priority clearly has to be given to heads of State and heads of Government.

In response to the concern expressed as to whether or not heads of delegation will be allowed to participate in the round tables, I think it is very clear. As the delegation of Mexico pointed out, in subparagraph (b) (iii) of the third preambular paragraph, it says "Member States are encouraged to be represented at the round tables at the level of heads of State or Government". This clearly means that Member States can, in fact, be represented by non-heads of State and non-heads of Government. The decision of the General Assembly draft resolution is very clear. There is nothing that prevents the participation of any head of delegation at whatever rank the country sends.

I think that flexibility is built into this draft resolution. If we need to make that explicit, then we can amend paragraph 4 of the annex to say that each head of State, head of Government or head of delegation attending the round tables may be accompanied by two advisers. Hopefully, this may address the concern that has been expressed about the participation of the observers.

Apart from this, I genuinely do not believe that there are major or fundamental problems with this draft resolution. This has been, as you pointed out, Sir, the subject of many, many informal consultations in many forms over the past few months.

We are now less than four weeks away from the Millennium Summit. I hope that we will have at least a paper that we can fax to our respective heads of State or heads of Government to say that these are the decisions on the procedural aspects of the Summit that they are going to attend. After we have done so, I hope that we will spend some time switching our attention to the substance of the Summit. I am glad that the representative of Chile has spoken up and asked questions about how we are going to ensure the success of these round tables, which are essentially an experiment in the United Nations community, because never before in the history of the United Nations have we tried to have interactive round tables among heads of State or Government. Given the fact that this is an experiment, a great deal of preparation will have to made, and I strongly endorse the suggestion that he has made.

Of course, I speak, to some extent, with a certain degree of self-interest, as the representative of a country that may be chairing one of the four round tables; and I say "may" because it has not been decided yet by our group. We would then strongly endorse the suggestion that before prospective Chairmen of the four round tables begin to have consultations on the substance of the round tables with the Member States of the United Nations, a decision should be made on the procedural aspects of the Summit meeting. I sincerely hope that before we break up this morning we will arrive at a decision, and if there is anything else I can do, Mr. Acting President, to support you I would be happy to do so.

Mr. Fernández Palacio (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since I am taking the floor for the first time, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and for your constant efforts to achieve a consensus for adoption of the draft resolution.

In connection with the statement that was made by the Ambassador of the Bahamas in his capacity as representative of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), we want, first of all, to support the position he expressed regarding the fact that the group was not present at the meetings to which you referred, Sir, which took place before this meeting, because GRULAC was working from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. It was at that time that the most recent figures regarding the number of participants in the round tables were put forward.

My delegation wonders what criteria were used for changes regarding the participation of the members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group in the respective round tables, bearing in mind that the group did not participate in those most recent consultations from which these changes emerged.

We also wanted to point out that while geographical distribution is an important criterion for the composition of the round tables, the draft itself speaks of flexibility. In the case of our own country, we look at these changes bearing in mind that our President is unable to participate in any round table except on Thursday morning. That is why we support the possibility of increasing the number of members for the Latin American and Caribbean Group from 9 to 10. Otherwise, it really would be very difficult, in fact

impossible, for us to plan to participate in another round table.

This being said — and this is something that we stated in the meeting of our group this morning as well — we support the changes introduced by the Ambassador of the Bahamas on behalf of the members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and we again appeal to delegations to show flexibility.

We do not believe that there has been any specific objection to these changes proposed by our group so that the concerns that we are expressing can be addressed.

The Acting President: Let me say that the meeting held this morning was at the behest of the various regional heads. They did indeed mention that the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States was meeting. Therefore, Sir, we know you were not there. The revision that was sought was to remove the minimum, because the ceiling had been agreed earlier, based on the space available in the rooms agreed upon for these meetings. Therefore, to lift that agreement would have meant that if we had added one participant for those two days for the Latin American and Caribbean Group, we would then have had to remove one on those days from the other groups. However, we can still look at this. You will probably find that the essential thing was that we did not want to set a minimum, because one does not set a minimum and then find that people do not come at all because they feel that if they are not up to six or seven, they will not be there. That is why all earlier numbers were removed, to clarify any ambiguity.

However, what we are now saying, and what has been assigned to the different regions, is what the room can take. In working this out, my information was that different regional heads had been consulted. This morning's meeting was not called by the President; they asked to meet for clarification, and that is how we came up with the revision. It was only to remove what had been perceived as the minimum number required to attend and to say that the flexibility was there. I thank you all the same for your comments.

Mr. Al-Ahmed (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for your wise management of this meeting.

I would like to make two comments. The first one pertains to paragraph 2 of the annex, which defines the freedom to discuss the report of the Secretary-General within the meetings. We propose that the beginning of the second sentence of the paragraph be amended to read as follows:

> "The heads of State and heads of Government or heads of delegation would be free to discuss ...";

then the paragraph should continue as it is until the end.

My second comment deals with paragraph 4 of the annex, upon which the representatives of Oman and Singapore have commented. My delegation supports their proposals in this respect.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for holding this important meeting to discuss organizational matters related to the Millennium Summit.

Very briefly, I would like to support the proposal made by the representative of Kyrgyzstan to amend paragraph 4 of the annex, which has been supported by Oman, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Lee Baek-soon Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to comment briefly on some points in the draft resolution for the sake of better accuracy.

First, with regard to the monitoring of the round-table proceedings, it is my delegation's understanding that Conference Room 3 was designated as the place where the accredited delegates and observers could follow the round-table proceedings via closed-circuit television. However, in paragraph 9 of the annex to the draft resolution before us, Conference Room 3 is merely referred to as "the overflow room". My delegation would like to know whether this rather vague expression is due to some logistical problem or to some other reason. Also, exactly what does "the overflow room" mean?

Secondly, for the sake of brevity, in paragraph 5 of the annex, my delegation does not feel that it is necessary to repeat the composition of each round table four times, as it is exactly the same throughout all four, even if we take into account some oral amendments proposed at today's meeting.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): I just wanted to thank you once again, Sir, for organizing this morning's meeting.

I want briefly to support what has been said by the representatives of Singapore and Chile on the role of the Chairpersons of the four round tables. It would indeed be useful for them to play an active part, so that the round tables can be truly interactive.

I also wanted to support what was said by Chile and Malawi about the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders.

The Acting President: Let me say how delighted I am with this meeting — the frankness of our discussion, the comments, the very useful tips and observations that have been made by representatives and the spirit of cooperation that has been displayed across the board.

Before we adopt this draft resolution, I wish to turn to the revisions to the text drawn from the comments, suggestions and observations that have been made this morning. They are as follows — and I am going to read very slowly so that we make sure that all interests are covered:

In the fifth line of paragraph 1, delete the words "at all times".

Paragraph 4 should now read,

> "Each head of State or head of Government or head of delegation attending the round tables may be accompanied by two advisers."

In paragraph 5 (a) (i), delete "thirteen or"; in paragraph 5 (a) (ii), delete "thirteen or"; in paragraph 5 (a) (iii), delete "five or"; in paragraph 5 (a) (iv), delete "eight or"; and in paragraph 5 (a) (v), delete "seven or". The same deletions would apply to the other corresponding subparagraphs of paragraph 5.

Turning to paragraph 6 of the annex, concerning the chairpersons of the round tables, paragraph 6 (a) remains unchanged.

Paragraph 6 (b) should read as follows:

> "The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of the Republic of Poland."

Paragraph 6 (c) should read as follows:

> "The round table to be held on Thursday, 7 September, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías, President of the Republic of Venezuela."

Paragraph 6 (d) should read as follows:

> "The round table to be held on Friday, 8 September, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria."

In paragraph 7, the following text should be inserted after the words "in its capacity as observer,":

> "as well as the intergovernmental organizations listed in paragraph 11 below".

The last sentence of paragraph 10 should be deleted.

In paragraph 11, the following text should be inserted after the words "in this connection":

> "and without prejudice to other organizations which have observer status in the General Assembly".

In the same paragraph, the words "Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders" should be deleted.

In my view, those revisions to draft resolution A/54/L.87 take account of the concerns of everyone in this room.

Mr. Fernández Palacio (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): While acknowledging, Sir, your efforts to accommodate the concerns of all delegations, I once again appeal to your understanding and wisdom and ask that the amendment earlier proposed by the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States be incorporated into the draft text: that the number of Latin American and Caribbean States in paragraph 5 (a) of the annex be increased from nine to ten. It will be impossible for my delegation to contemplate any other placement in the round tables owing to the schedule of our head of State. In discussions held with other regional groups in the past few minutes, there has been no objection to such a change.

The Acting President: I have been informed that it would be possible to alter the number of participants down the line. Hence, we shall add one participant to each section of paragraph 5, as follows. African States, 15 Member States; Asian States, 15 Member States;

Eastern European States, seven Member States; Latin America and Caribbean States, 10 Member States; and Western European and other States, nine Member States.

Mr. Fernández Palacio (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will be very brief. First, I want to thank you once again, Mr. Acting President, for your flexibility and understanding of the concern expressed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group, and the concern of our country in particular.

I would simply like a clarification. Does the increase by one of the number of participating Member States apply to all of paragraph 5, including all the subparagraphs, or does it apply only to subparagraphs (a) and (b)?

The Acting President: It applies across the board for all the meetings.

Mr. Moore (Bahamas): I suspect I need not speak. I wanted to thank you, Sir, and the representatives here for showing that flexibility to the Group.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt): I just need a clarification. Mr. Acting President, you have generously allocated 15 seats to Africa in each round table. That is 60. How would this fit, since there are 53 African countries in the United Nations?

The Acting President: I think, being Africans, we shall work it out among ourselves.

I do not think we need to reopen this debate. It has been a wonderful day.

I move now that we adopt draft resolution A/54/L.87, as orally revised.

Draft resolution A/54/L.87, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 54/281).

The Acting President: Namibia has requested to make a few observations following the adoption of the resolution.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): I will make a very brief comment. I know that it is almost lunchtime. I promise I will not be long.

I want to thank you very much, Mr. Acting President, for the manner in which you have conducted our meeting, and I also want to thank all delegations very much for the cooperation and flexibility they have displayed during our discussions.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate the historic significance and importance my delegation attaches to this forthcoming event. The decisions we took jointly on several procedural issues for the smooth running of the Millennium Summit are certainly enhancing the preparatory process. Let me also stress that this is a Summit for all of us, all United Nations Member States, and all the people of the world. My delegation believes that the content of the resolution we have adopted today, and in particular the content of paragraph 1 of the annex to the resolution just adopted, is indeed a reflection of the historic importance of the Summit. It is Namibia's strong view that in our preparations at all levels — and I stress, at all levels — we should concentrate on the bigger issues and not reinvent the wheel.

Finally, let me reiterate that it is a Summit for all of us, and unity of purpose is essential if this Summit is to be a success.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): My intervention will be brief. I just want to make a simple request. Since this is an important resolution that we have just adopted with many oral revisions, can I request the Secretariat to ensure that we have clean copies of it by the end of the day? That is a request I want to address to the Secretariat through you, Mr. Acting President.

The Acting President: I understand there will be no problem with that.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): I know it is very dangerous to stand before a herd of diplomats who are dying to rush off for lunch, so I shall be very brief.

First of all let me congratulate you, Sir, on your excellent conduct of this morning's proceedings. There were times when my heart stopped beating and I thought we would not reach a decision. But I should obviously have had much greater confidence in your ability to ensure that we succeeded, and I congratulate you on that.

The second point is that having now completed most of the discussions on the procedure, I hope that there will be opportunities between now and the convening of the Millennium Summit for us to have sessions to discuss the substantive aspects of the Millennium Summit, both in the plenary meetings and in the round tables. I know there was some mention of

this by the representative of Chile earlier. I hope there will be some occasion for all of us to have, in a sense, interactive discussions among ourselves to ensure that when our leaders arrive here for the interactive discussions, they will have common mental maps as they enter the room and not have different mental maps and different understandings of what the interactive round tables will be like. For example, we have heard some rather alarming reports that some delegations are preparing six-minute speeches for the plenary meetings and four-minute speeches for the round table. That would completely undermine the whole purpose and meaning of the round table, if delegations come here with prepared texts, instead of coming here prepared to have a conversation of the kind, frankly, that we had this morning, with its ups and downs and difficulties; but that is what an interactive round table is about. I hope we will have meetings to discuss that.

My third and final point is that — and I am sorry if I sound like a johnny-one-note on this issue — at two different discussions of this group in the informal meetings, I have raised the question of the problems our delegations have faced in the past in getting access to this building at times of summits and at times when heads of State are in town. I must say that even though I may be the one person raising it all the time, whenever I walk down the United Nations corridors, I meet so many people who thank me very much for raising the issue because they have had experiences in which their Foreign Ministers have been stopped from crossing First Avenue, their Foreign Ministers have been held back for two hours and have been prevented from having access to the United Nations building.

This is why we made the proposal for a "green lane" and we sought assurance that a green lane could be made available to all delegations, 24 hours a day, so they could enter the United Nations building whenever they wanted to. At the last meeting, the representative of the host Government graciously said that they would take on board the concerns expressed by Nigeria, Egypt and Singapore and provide a response. I wonder whether we could have, either now or later, a comprehensive response from the host Government, coupled with very firm and categorical assurances that these green lanes will be in place for us to reach the United Nations building during the Millennium Summit.

The Acting President: Let me say that after the representative of Singapore spoke to me on this subject last night — I have been out of town for some time — I consulted with Ambassador Holbrooke, who also shared this concern and informed me that even he had been embarrassed by his people from time to time.

He is willing to consider the possibility of working out with the United States Secret Service and the New York City police the best way to make sure that during those three days we are not prevented from carrying out our work. He is also willing to do that jointly with some of us if need be.

I understand that he will be going out of town Monday night for a few days. Perhaps we could set a date with him so that a number of us — including the representative of Singapore, who has been most vocal on the issue — can meet with him and the police. I think that it is important that our Ministers and our delegations not be frustrated in any way by the security arrangements of the host country.

With respect to the other suggestions that were made about holding meetings and further consultations, I am sure that the office of the President will make those arrangements as necessary.

Mr. Khare (India): I will be very brief. May I begin, Mr. President, by stating how thankful my delegation is for the guidance that you have provided to our deliberations. The adoption of this procedural resolution, as orally revised, is indeed a glowing tribute to your wisdom and skill.

My delegation did not take the floor earlier, in the spirit of flexibility that it has continuously demonstrated — and will continue to demonstrate — throughout this important process. However, as we are in a formal meeting of the General Assembly, I wanted to, for the record, associate myself with those speakers who have expressed regret that we were not able to retain the reference to the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders.

Mr. Ahmad Chaudhry (Pakistan): Since I opened the discussion on paragraphs 10 and 11 this morning, which led to a very rich debate, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on having concluded our discussions with such diplomatic skill, which is most commendable. We had an excellent and very rich debate, in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, that took on board the concerns of all.

We expect that it is in this same spirit that we will now take up the Millennium Summit outcome document, which is also very important; we are expecting the revised version of that document.

In conclusion, I should like once again to congratulate you, Mr. President.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.